

EPA dioxin ruling to be appealed

By Jim Woods
Dispatch Staff Reporter

JACKSON, Ohio — A ruling by the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency that allows sludge with traces of dioxin to be used in reclaiming a strip mine will be appealed, Jackson County commissioners said yesterday.

The Ohio EPA on Monday approved Mead Corp.'s plan to use the industrial sludge at its Broken Arrow site near Wellston. The sludge, known as Bypro, is a residue of paper-pulp processing at Mead's Chillicothe plant.

Dioxin is a generic term for a number of related chemical compounds, the most toxic of which has been found to be a potential cancer-causing substance in humans.

The state agency said dioxin concentration of 11 parts per trillion in the sludge is below the 1,000 parts per trillion level considered harmful.

County Commissioner Marvin Keller said commissioners believe research is lacking on potential ill effects that even a small amount of dioxin could cause.

"I would not want to think 20 years down the road that we did not try to stop something that could upset the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of Jackson County," he said yesterday.

His office has received 150 calls protesting the EPA's decision, Keller said.

He said the Jackson County prosecutor's office would file an appeal with the Ohio Environmental Board of Review, a three-member panel empowered to examine Ohio EPA decisions.

The board can uphold, deny or modify the decision, said Allan Franks, an Ohio EPA spokesman.

Mead Corp. can continue using the sludge unless the commissioners ask the review board for a delay until the appeal is processed, Franks said.

Keller said he did not yet know whether a delay would be requested. Commissioners will meet Thursday to determine strategy.

Keller said he hoped money could be raised from private sources to help pay for the appeal.

Small fire at Fernald forces 18 to evacuate

A small fire in a uranium storage area at the Fernald uranium-processing refinery forced the evacuation of 18 employees but caused no apparent injuries, a plant spokesman said Thursday.

The workers will undergo routine urine tests for inhalation of uranium.

Jack Martin, director of public affairs for Westinghouse Materials Company of Ohio, said the fire began about 9 p.m. Wednesday and

was confined to a 30-gallon drum of uranium metal chips stored outside Plant 6 at the Feed Materials Production Center.

Air samples taken inside the building indicated slightly elevated concentrations of airborne radioactivity, Martin said. Those levels have since returned to normal, he said. Operations in Plant 6 resumed at 8:30 a.m. Thursday.

May 23, 1987 THE CINCINNATI ENQUIRER Metro/C-3

EPA's work delayed at Skinner Landfill

BY WALT SCHAEFER
The Cincinnati Enquirer

WEST CHESTER, Ohio — The second phase of an Environmental Protection Agency investigation of the Skinner Landfill has been delayed because the test sites were covered over.

"We were going to start our second phase of the project in early April, but when the project manager went out to the site . . . he discovered the owner of the landfill had piled 15 to 20 feet of broken cement, pieces of metal and concrete reinforcing rods there," Margaret McCue of the EPA's Region 5 office in Chicago said Thursday.

"It wouldn't be accurate to say they're filling in only those areas we want to investigate," McCue said. "However, it appears they're moving some of

the fill to those areas."

Landfill owner Elsa Skinner could not be reached for comment.

The landfill, near the East Fork of Mill Creek and near Union Elementary School on Cincinnati-Dayton Road in Union Township, was put on a priority list by the EPA for a hazardous substance investigation in 1982.

EPA officials have said the landfill has a 20-year history of residential complaints because of smoke and odors.

McCue said the EPA intended to use well-digging equipment to bore into the ground and collect samples of what is underneath the landfill. Because the well-diggers would be damaged by the debris, the federal workers will dig trenches to collect the samples, she said.